

REMARKS

Applicants request favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the outstanding objection and rejections, and allowance of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-7 and 9-19 are pending, of which Claims 1 and 9 are independent. Claims 9-14 have been rejoined, as indicated in the March 11, 2008 Office Action. Claims 1, 4, 9, 10, and 11 have been amended to define Applicants' invention more clearly. Claims 15-19 are newly presented. Support for the amendments and the new claims can be found throughout the originally-filed disclosure, for example, in paragraphs 13, 14, 16, 18, 23, and 24. Thus, Applicants submit that no new matter has been presented.

Claim 9 was objected to because of a minor informality. The Examiner indicated that line 14 of Claim 9 should recite "first identifier" instead of "first." Applicants have herein amended Claim 9 as suggested by the Examiner. Thus, Applicants submit that this objection has been overcome.

Claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-10, and 12-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over Janacek et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,684,248). Claims 4 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Janacek et al. in view of Fung et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0055909). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for at least the following reasons.

Independent Claims 1 and 9 are directed to, respectively, a method for facilitating access to messages and a method for a business to provide customer access to a private message. One feature of Claims 1 and 9 is that an intended recipient is authenticated using a second identifier. If there is no second identifier associated with the intended recipient,

the intended recipient is prompted to create or register a second identifier. Claims 15 and 18 further recite that after successfully authenticating the intended recipient, an address or link to a secure webpage on the secure website is provided to the intended recipient, wherein the secure webpage contains the message. Claims 16 and 19 further recite that if the message has multiple intended recipients, a separate copy of the message is not stored in the database for each intended recipient.

Janacek et al. does not suggest these features of Applicants' invention. Janacek et al. is directed to a method for secure transmission of a message where a recipient need not be a party to the network. In particular, if the recipient is not a party to the network, the system of Janacek et al. dynamically creates a new account. The recipient is then notified of the mail and the new account by a certified message containing a hyperlink, the hyperlink containing a username and (randomly-generated) password. See column 4, line 46 through column 5, line 24. Thus, the system of Janacek et al. automatically creates and provides a username and password to a new user.

The Office Action asserts that the username and password of Janacek et al. are equivalent to the second identifier of Claims 1 and 9. However, according to Applicants' invention of Claims 1 and 9, if a second identifier is not associated with an intended recipient, the intended recipient is prompted to create or register a second identifier. Therefore, Janacek et al. fails to suggest this feature of the invention of Claims 1 and 9. Further, Janacek et al. teaches away from such a feature in its discussion of the differences between the disclosed invention and other processes: "Through this unique process, users that may have never had contact with the organization will receive unique password-

protected accounts in the system.” Therefore, Janacek et al. does not suggest the second identifier feature of independent Claims 1 and 9.

Janacek et al. also fails to suggest providing a second address of or link to a secure webpage on a secure website, the secure webpage containing the message, as recited in Claims 15 and 18. Rather, Janacek only discusses “retrieving” a message from an inbox, but does not appear to disclose how the message is retrieved. Finally, Janacek et al. fails to suggest that if the message has multiple intended recipients, a separate copy of the message is not stored in the database for each intended recipient, as recited in Claims 16 and 19.

Applicants submit that Claims 1, 9, 15, 16, 18, and 19 define features of the invention that are not suggested by Janacek et al. Fung et al. fails to remedy the above-noted deficiencies of Janacek et al. Therefore, Applicants submit that Claims 1, 9, 15, 16, 18, and 19 are allowable. The remaining claims are dependent, either directly or indirectly, on one of independent claims 1 and 9, and are allowable by virtue of their dependency, and for further defining patentable features of Applicants’ invention. Independent consideration thereof is requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance and request an early Notice of Allowance.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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